

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
EXHIBIT NO. 17
DATE 2-6-07
BILL NO. SB 345

Steve Benedict
Hamilton, Montana

2/3/07

URGENT: Please Deliver to Senator Laible as soon as possible

Memo: Senator Rick Laible
Montana SD 44

From: Steve Benedict
Hamilton, MT

RE: SB 345

Hi Rick,

As my Senator, I would sure appreciate it if you would take this letter on SB345 to the Senate Local Government Committee hearing on February 6th, and read it as testimony, and made part of the committee record.

After careful analysis, I believe SB345 is a waste of valuable legislative time. While I firmly support waterway setbacks, this bill will mandate arbitrary solutions that should be left to local governments. We have a vast state, with diverse needs, that are best addressed on the local level. Gallatin County seems to have a history of trying to pass the buck to the legislature, instead of solving their problems locally. Most counties in the state welcome the opportunity to develop a local dialogue on issues like waterway setbacks, and come up with their own unique solutions. Efforts are already underway in many Montana counties to involve their residents in planning waterway setbacks. Hundreds of hours have already been put in by local residents around the state, on this issue, and many thousands of dollars in research has been invested locally to identify scientific processes, on which to base local decisions. Fragile coalitions have been formed in many counties, between farmers, ranchers, sportsmen, builders and planners. All this local work has been done in good faith, to address waterway setbacks. Much progress has been made. I think our county officials and members of these groups should be commended, and not kicked in the teeth. SB 345 is a slap in the face of local control, and should be gently but firmly laid to rest by the Senate Local Government Committee.

Thank you,

Steve Benedict
Hamilton, Montana